



# 5 STAR

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## IKE Weather

### Today

High: 43  
Low: 22  
Sunrise: 0637  
Sunset: 1654  
Partly Cloudy



### Tomorrow

High: 41  
Low: 31  
Sunrise: 0636  
Sunset: 1655  
Partly Cloudy



# Where a Yule Log Is So Much More Than Christmas Cake

By Steven Erlanger  
—Times Digest

PARIS — There is an economic crisis here this Christmas, but you can't really see it. Paris glitters like a fashion model, lit with flashing bulbs and studded with diamonds, drinking Champagne and eating cake.

Even if more of the jewels are rhinestones, it is only fitting — the Champagne company Moët et Chandon has a curvy bottle dressed in rhinestones, too, and not just any rhinestones:

Swarovski crystal. The bottle can be yours, in an elegant chiller, for about \$125.

"We are into the stardification of the product, turning it into a gem," said Marie Mascré, who spent seven years at rival Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin and now runs a wine-marketing company. She pointed to a bottle of 1999 Piper-Heidsieck in a darkly illuminated window, with the word "Rare" running in sexily cursive letters on the shimmering bottle.

"These bottles represent a dream, a fantasy, imagi-



nation," she said. "You're almost no longer interested in the taste!"

Every French holiday or celebration is associated with Champagne, but Christmas and New Year's represent a major part of the market, especially since a gift of Champagne is both easy and socially safe.

But Christmas is even more important for the Bûche de Noël, the Yule log popular wherever France put down its roots. It is traditionally a spongy cake bound with chocolate butter cream and decorated

to look like a chunk of tree cut from the forest, often adorned with marzipan mushrooms and other bucolic delights, like spun sugar moss.

In Paris, however, the bûche is another opportunity for creativity, commerce, competition and consumption. Every bakery has bûches, large and small, but the big houses like Dalloyau and Lenôtre, and the artisan pastry and chocolate shops, like Jean-Paul Hévin and Pierre Hermé, all produce special bûches every year.

FOOD Continued on Page 3

## Sports Corner

### Yankees Defy Recession to Reel In Another Star

By **MICHAEL S. SCHMIDT**  
and **JAY SCHREIBER**

--Courtesy of the Times Digest

Continuing to spend money as if they were printing it, the Yankees on Tuesday signed the All-Star free-agent first baseman Mark Teixeira to an eight-year, \$180 million contract that pushes the team's off-season expenditures close to half a billion dollars.

The signing underlines the Yankees' economic might as they move into a new stadium with the help of public financing and makes clear their willingness to remain a financial bulldozer in the midst of a recession.

The signing, which was confirmed by a person in baseball with knowledge of the matter, will not be official until Teixeira (pronounced tuh-SHARE-uh) has a physical. Once it does become official, the Yankees will have the four players — Teixeira, Alex Rodriguez, Derek Jeter and the newly signed C. C. Sabathia — with the largest contracts in the sport, at an overall cost of slightly more than \$800 million.

The signing also means that the Yankees, whose 2008 payroll of

\$209 million dwarfed the competition, will now have a 2009 payroll close to that amount and perhaps \$50 million more than the next team on the list.

None of this, of course, guarantees that the Yankees are headed back to the World Series. Despite their payroll advantage, they missed out on the postseason in 2008 for the first time in 14 years, and they have not been to the Series since 2003. In recent seasons, they have watched Boston emerge as baseball's model team, with the Red Sox winning two championships while spending a good deal of money, but nowhere near as much as the Yankees.

But in the end, the Yankees are the Yankees, with resources others don't have. They were the team that stole Johnny Damon from Boston in December 2005 with a four-year, \$52 million deal arranged by the agent Scott Boras, and by Tuesday morning they were the team back at it with Boras again, negotiating for a player who has few, if any, flaws.

## Bowl Championship Series Weekly Schedule

Motor City Dec. 26

7:30 p.m. Detroit, MI Central Michigan vs. Florida Atlantic ESPN  
Meineke Car Care Dec. 27

1 p.m. Charlotte, NC North Carolina vs. West Virginia ESPN  
Champs Sports Dec. 27

4:30 p.m. Orlando, FL Florida State vs. Wisconsin ESPN  
Emerald Dec. 27

8 p.m. San Francisco, CA California vs. Miami (Fla.) ESPN  
Independence Dec. 28

8:15 p.m. Shreveport, LA Louisiana Tech vs. Northern Illinois ESPN

## Questions of the Day



### BMR

(1) Define military courtesy?

### EAWS



(2) How many conflagration stations does IKE have?

### ESWS



(3) What should the fire main pressure be at the inlet side of the inline eductor?

## Answers

(3) 100 PSI or greater.

(2) Three, one for each hangar bay.

(1) An act or verbal expression of consideration or respect for others.



## SAILOR IN THE SPOTLIGHT



AOAA Mario Cottonham  
Weapons Department  
G-3 Division

Aviation Ordnanceman Airman Apprentice Mario Cottonham, 20, is from McGehee, Arkansas. He joined the Navy in February 2008, and reported to IKE in August of the same year, after graduating from AO "A" School.

Cottonham says he joined the Navy to travel, meet new people, gain experience in his job and do something productive with his life.

He is passionate about producing and recording music, and hopes to one day be successful in the music industry.

Aboard IKE, Cottonham's goals are to progress in his job and advance at every opportunity.

His favorite thing about being a member of IKE's crew is interacting with people.

"You learn things from people," he said. "They have knowledge to give you."

## Mexican Shoppers Go North

By **JOHN DOUGHERTY**

— Courtesy of Times Digest

TUCSON, Ariz. — Mexican shoppers with fists full of cash and long Christmas lists are pouring across the border into hotels, restaurants and shopping malls here, providing an economic boost in a downward spiraling economy.

The families, mostly middle- and upper-income, are traveling hundreds of miles to take advantage of a much wider selection of products at substantially lower prices than can be found in their hometowns in the Mexican states of Sonora and Sinaloa — even after the recent 30 percent devaluation of the Mexican peso against the dollar.

For many, it is a long journey by car that includes multiple searches at Mexi-

can police roadblocks followed by a huge traffic jam at the border crossing in Nogales, where delays of two hours or longer to enter the United

States are common. But even with the aggravation, Mexican shoppers said it was still worth making the trip.

"We can find everything we want and it's much cheaper," said Aurelia Peralta, a 38-year-old homemaker from Hermosillo, a city of 700,000 about 200 miles south of Tucson. Pointing to the Guitar Hero World Tour display model her teenage son was playing, she said popular Christmas gifts cost twice as much in Hermosillo.

Mexican visitors spend more than \$300 million a year in the Tucson metropolitan area.

## Holiday Safety Tips

-Inform your chain of command on your travel plans.

-Use Operational Risk Management to make smart decisions.

-Understand and discuss the causes of motor vehicle mishaps.

-Use alcohol responsibly. If you decide to drink, do so in moderation and do NOT drink and drive.

-Buckle up.

-Pay close attention to home safety. The number of fires increases this time of year.

-Remember the sobering reality of suicides. It is the second leading cause of death in the Navy and is most prevalent during the holiday season.

## Food

From Page 1

Of course, it's not just the endless range of flavors but the quality of the ingredients and the imagination of the designs. Some look like beds, others like suitcases or ice-cream bars. It can be a long way from the forest.

Lenôtre actually hires a prominent designer — this year, Hubert de Givenchy — to create a special bûche, in collaboration with its executive chef, Guy Krenzer, 44. Given that St. Hubert is the patron saint of hunters (and of mathematicians, by the way, but of course you knew that), Givenchy designed a cake with two stag heads at each end, cast in clear sugar like crystal, their antlers festooned with gold leaf like a Buddha and lit from underneath by two tiny LED lamps that last 12 hours.

The flavor is chocolate, sourced from Tanzania,

Ghana and Sao Tomé, with a hint of Earl Grey tea. And it is swathed in chocolate colored and textured to look like maroon velvet.

There is a golden ribbon of pulled sugar, "like Murano glass," and, of course, the Givenchy signature on a chocolate plaque. Don't forget the light dusting of 22-carat gold.

Only 700 are made for sale, and the cost is \$160, compared to \$60 to \$75 for an "ordinary" Lenôtre bûche. The company, which also has a thriving catering business, expects to sell 15,000 bûches this Christmas. ★

## National News

### Wal-Mart Settles Wage Suits for \$352 Mil

By Steven Greenhouse

— Courtesy of Times Digest

Wal-Mart said Tuesday it would pay at least \$352 million, and possibly far more, to settle accusations across the country that it had forced employees to work off the clock. Several lawyers described it as the largest settlement ever for violations of wage-and-hour laws.

After years of being embarrassed by lawsuits over its wage practices, the company agreed to settle 63 cases pending in federal and state courts in 42 states. The workers and their lawyers will receive at least \$352 million, and the payments could reach \$640 million, depending on how many claims affected workers submit.

Union critics of Wal-Mart, the world's largest retailer, saw the settlement as proof of their view that the company achieves its low prices in part by cheating workers.

But the company rejected that characterization, saying it had already cor-

rected wage practices that it has long attributed to local managers acting without authority.

"Many of these lawsuits were filed years ago, and the allegations are not representative of the company we are today," Tom Mars, general counsel and executive vice president at Wal-Mart Stores, said.

The newly settled cases involved hundreds of thousands of current and former hourly employees.

It is unclear how much the average employee will receive, but the sum could be several hundred dollars.

The dozens of wage-and-hour lawsuits against Wal-Mart accused the company and its managers of various illegal tactics. Those included forcing employees to work unpaid off the clock, erasing hours from time cards, and preventing workers from taking lunch and other breaks that were either promised by the company or guaranteed by state laws.

### Art Museum to Receive a \$30 Million Rescue

By Robbie Brown

— Courtesy of Times Digest

LOS ANGELES — The Museum of Contemporary Art, known for its collection of post-war paintings and sculpture but also for an ambitious exhibition program that has driven it to the brink of financial collapse, said Tuesday it had negotiated a \$30 million bailout with Eli Broad, this city's leading cultural patron.

The museum said the rescue plan, which involves a restructuring of its management, would allow it to maintain its downtown headquarters, a linchpin of the revitalization of the city's central business district. The bailout will also prevent the museum from selling off artworks or otherwise

compromising its collection and operations.

The plan avoids a painful embarrassment for Los Angeles, which has promoted itself as the nation's second cultural capital and a leading force in the field of contemporary art.

With the rescue plan now in place, the museum said Tuesday, its trustees have pledged to give more than \$20 million over the next five years to support the endowment and operations.

Broad's foundation has offered to match the first \$15 million as the money is received and to provide an additional \$3 million per year for exhibitions for five years.



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